

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims 2 and 5 as shown below, in which deleted terms are shown with strikethrough and/or added terms are shown with underscoring. Also, please add claims 7-18 as shown.

1. (Original) A valve device for a silencer, which opens a bypass passage provided in the silencer to flow exhaust gas through the bypass passage when exhaust gas pressure rises to a certain pressure, the valve device comprising:

a base having a valve opening through which exhaust gas flows; and

a plate-like valve for opening and closing the valve opening, the plate-like valve being fixed to the base at its proximal portion, wherein the plate-like valve is bent at both side edges thereof in a certain range extending from its distal end toward the proximal portion.

2. (Currently amended) A valve device for a silencer according to claim 1, further comprising a plate spring member, a distal end of which abuts on a surface of the plate-like valve to urge the plate-like valve toward a valve close position, wherein the plate spring member is obliquely arranged relative to the plate-like valve such that an abutting position of the plate spring member against the plate-like valve shifts toward the proximal portion of the plate-like valve with an increase in a deflection amount of the plate-like valve, and wherein the plate spring member abuts on a reinforced area of the plate-like valve ~~that is reinforced by bending the side edges of the plate-like valve.~~

3. (Original) A valve device for a silencer according to claim 2, wherein the plate spring member is bent to form a curved surface.

4. (Original) A valve device for a silencer according to claim 2, further comprising a stopper member, wherein the plate-like valve is sandwiched between the base and a proximal portion of the stopper member and fixed thereto, and wherein the plate spring member is fixed to a

distal portion of the stopper member.

5. (Currently amended) A valve device for a silencer according to claim 4, wherein the stopper member, the plate-like valve, and the base are fixed together by welding.

6. (Original) A valve device for a silencer according to claim 4, wherein the plate spring member is fixed to the stopper member by welding.

7. (New) A valve device for a silencer according to claim 2, wherein the reinforced area of the plate-like valve includes said certain range wherein said valve is bent at said both side edges thereof.

8. (New) A valve device for a silencer according to claim 2, wherein the distal end of the plate spring member is bent to form a curved surface.

9. (New) A valve device for a silencer according to claim 2, including a second plate spring member which urges said plate-like valve toward the valve close position.

10. (New) A valve device for a silencer according to claim 2, wherein said second plate spring member is superposed on, and has a shorter length than, the first mentioned plate spring member.

11. (New) A valve device for a silencer according to claim 1, wherein an intermediate portion of said plate-like valve, between said proximal portion and said distal end, operatively engages said valve opening in said base to open and close said valve opening.

12. (New) A valve device for a silencer, which opens a bypass passage provided in the silencer to flow exhaust gas through the bypass passage when exhaust gas pressure rises to a certain

pressure, the valve device comprising:

- a base having a valve opening through which exhaust gas flows;
- a plate-like valve which opens and closes the valve opening;
- a stopper which restricts a degree of opening of the plate-like valve; and
- a plate-like spring urges the plate-like valve toward a closed position thereof;

the plate-like valve being fixed to the base and the stopper at a proximal portion of said valve; and

the plate-like valve is reinforced against deflection in a certain range extending from its distal end toward the proximal portion.

13. (New) A valve device for a silencer according to claim 12, wherein a distal end of said plate-like spring abuts on a surface of the plate-like valve to urge the plate-like valve toward said closed position thereof, the plate spring member is obliquely arranged relative to the plate-like valve such that an abutting position of the plate spring member against the plate-like valve shifts toward the proximal portion of the plate-like valve with an increase in a deflection amount of the plate-like valve, and the plate spring member abuts on said reinforced range of the plate-like valve.

14. (New) A valve device for a silencer according to claim 12, wherein the plate-like valve is sandwiched between the base and a proximal portion of the stopper member and fixed thereto, and wherein the plate spring member is fixed to a distal portion of the stopper member.

15. (New) A valve device for a silencer according to claim 12, wherein the stopper member, the plate-like valve, and the base are fixed together by welding.

16. (New) A valve device for a silencer according to claim 12, wherein the plate spring member is fixed to the stopper member by welding.

17. (New) A valve device for a silencer according to claim 12, wherein the reinforced

range of the plate-like valve includes side edges of said valve which are bent.

18. (New) A valve device for a silencer according to claim 12, wherein a distal end of the plate spring member which operatively engages said valve is bent to form a curved surface.